

Meeting Minutes

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee September 13, 2007 – Selectman's Room

Members Present:

Jim Terry (Chair), Harry Beyer, Jim Coutre, Ken Miller, Gerry Boyle, Barbara Pike, Andrea Siani, Elissa Brown

Members Absent:

None

1. Selection of Clerk

With the resignation of Nancy Crowther, the committee needs to find another clerk to take minutes. With no volunteers, it was decided to make the clerk/minute taker be a rotating assignment. Ken Miller volunteered to take the minutes for this meeting.

2. Approval of last meeting's minutes

After discussion of version 2 of the minutes from the last meeting (Aug. 30), it was decided to defer approval to the next meeting as there were additional suggested revisions.

3. Dick Waters discussion about the rail trail survey

Dick requested the opportunity to discuss the rail trail survey he financed and its findings. He explained to the committee its aims and what it found. There was much discussion among the committee members and some commented that it was another set of input data for decision making. A member noted that a significant finding was that 84% of the respondents favored a trail.

4. Reaction to Recent Community Outreach meeting (Historical and environmental findings)

Ken – interesting comments by Peter Alden that wildlife travels at night when people are not there and on “Big Night” it is wet and people are also not there. This should minimize people/wildlife conflicts.

Andrea – leaf litter within the rails now helps migrating wildlife on Big Night.

Jim T. – surprised at the number of historical artifacts found.

Jim C. – should we leave some rails for historical purposes? We should leave the cisterns intact.

Elissa – we should provide some examples of how to display historical artifacts.

Jim C. – all environmental investigation was in the ROW – what about within the wetland delineation? The Jennie Dugan wetland is very valuable.

Elissa – The environmental conclusion is that the rail bed is a degraded environment and there are no major obstacles to development of the trail.

5. Emergency Access/Rest Rooms

Elissa – lamented the fact that Concord safety personnel provided what many take as their optimal design criteria. She thought having the bridge over the Assabet River able to carry a heavy motorized vehicle seemed overkill. It would be nice to know what the safety officials could live with.

JimC commented that VHB's statement of 28,000 lb vehicle access by emergency vehicles on the trail was not accurate per correspondence with both the Fire and Police Chiefs and that he would forward the correspondence

Comments were made that a bridge over the Assabet would not look much different if it allowed emergency vehicles to cross or not, but the cost difference would be substantial. After further discussion, a motion was made and voted unanimously (but Gerry left before the vote) to direct VHB to design bridges in Concord as follows:

"The bridge over the Assabet River should be designed to support non-motorized vehicles and be in general conformance with the context of the trail at that location. Existing bridges would be rehabilitated to accommodate anticipated trail uses."

Jim T. requested Ken send this information to Trish at VHB before the next meeting.

Harry thinks that, where space permits, the "S" curves used on the Rhode Island bikeway (from Providence to Bristol) are a good way to slow bikers at intersections.

Barbara stated we need to confirm the boundaries of the EOT (the ROW) because of the statements made by prison officials regarding ownership of the path they use as a driveway. She also commented that we should work to keep the prison people happy with the proposed trail, but be aware of the concerns of abutters on Commonwealth Avenue and work to make sure their situation is improved if a trail is built.

Rest rooms will be discussed at another meeting as time ran out.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting was set for September 27 at 7:30AM at 141 Keyes Road. VHB will be reporting on White Pond alternatives plus road crossing restrictions for trail users (bollards, gates, what Vancouver does etc).

Citizen Comments

Jill Appel – many kids will be using the proposed trail to go to school and in the late fall, winter and early spring the days are short and it would be dark in the afternoon. She suggested that the dawn to dusk proposed rule for the trail would then prohibit kids from using the trail in those months. She proposed that the committee amend the

dawn to dusk rule to allow use in those months. She suggested this would not need lights on the trail, however, but would require bicycle lights.

Judith Sprott – A bollard was used for the road accessing the White Pond cove but town officials always seemed to not have the key when they needed to use the road.

Dinny McIntyre – Stanley Park in Vancouver has a very good way to force people to get off their bicycle to cross roads. She suggested that VHB contact the Vancouver people about it. She offered to draw the configuration for VHB to help them understand it.

Dan Latham – How much more environmental work will be done? It is unclear if VHB did any field work. What will they be doing further? Jim T. replied that he will ask VHB that question and find out.

Jane Coutre – Jane gave some updates about where Sudbury is in the process for their part of the trail. She stated Sudbury has let a contract for an environmental study of 12 months duration. They have also funded a title search and there are issues. Bottom line is Sudbury is behind Concord and we need to consider where we want to terminate the trail on the southern end since there will be no trail from Sudbury to connect to.

The town should consider handicap access to sidewalks rather than just for the trail.

Kids going to school – this is more than just a trail issue. Kids should be forced to stop at road intersections.